3029.44 cr. in 1997-98. During April-November, '98, total trade amounted to Rs. 2381.25 cr. as compared to Rs. 1703.35 cr. in the same period in the previous year.

Under the SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) Agreement India and Bangladesh have exchanged tariff concession, on a large number of products under the first and second rounds of negotiations. During the third round of SAPTA negotiations which concluded recently, India has given concessions on 1758 tariff lines and Bangladesh has given concessions on 260 tariff lines. In additions, India has also deepened the concessions on 256 tariff lines given to Bangladesh at the 1st and 2nd Rounds of Negotiations. Further the Rules of Origin criterion for preferential tariffs has been reduced from 40% to 30%, in the case of imports from Bangladesh being Least Developed Country. With effect from 1st August, 1998, quantitative restrictions on all items of import from SAARC countries, including Bangladesh, on account of Balance of Payment reasons have been lifted.

In the last Trade Review meeting held on 8-9th Dec, 1998 at Commerce Secretary level, it was also agreed that infrastructurel facilities for exports/imports should be improved on both sides.

WTO Agreement on A griculture

2019. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether WTO agreement on agriculture is scheduled to be reviewed in the year 2000;

(b) whether the perceptions and interests of the developed and nondeveloped countries are at divergence;

(c) whether there is a need to protect the interests of our country against decisions detrimental to our interests; and

(d) if so, what are Government's plan in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes, Sir. In terms of Article 20 of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, Members have agreed that negotiations for continuing the reform process in trade in agriculture will be initiated one year before the end of the implementation period, which ends in the year 2000.

(b) The negotiations are yet to commence. Presently, an informal process of analysis and information exchange is going on and no sharp divisions of opinion have emerged as yet.

(c) India's interests will be safeguarded and strongly projected.

(d) The government has already initiated an exercise to study the impact of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture on India's trade in agriculture as vell as its domestic policies.

NCAER has been commissioned to conduct a detailed study. A process of consultations with the Ministry of Agriculture and the State Governments has also been initiated, so as to protect the interests of domestic farmers.

आयात व निर्यात के बीच अन्तर होना

2020. **श्री राज मोहिन्दर सिंह** :

श्री कपिल सिब्बल :

क्या वाणिज्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच हैं कि चालू वित्तीय वर्ष के दौरान देश में कतिपय वस्तुओं का अधिक आयात होने के कारण अन्तराष्ट्रीय व्यापार में भारी अन्तर होने की संभावना हैं; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो ऐसी कौन-कौन सी वस्तुएं हैं जिनका गत वर्ष किए गए आयात की तुलना में अधिक आयात किया गया हैं और इन वस्तुओं का इस वर्ष अधिक आयात किए जाने के क्या कारण है?

वाणिज्य मंत्री (श्री रामकृष्ण हेगड़े) : (क) वाणिज्यिक आसूचना एवं सांख्यिकी महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीआईएंडएस) से प्राप्त अनन्तिम आंकड़ो के